

Healthy Conflict Doesn't Treat Complaints as Criticism (July 2, 2026)

**"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."
(Matthew 5:9)**

The primary reason I disliked and avoided conflict as much as possible was because I was afraid of myself. I feared that in the height of my emotions or in the intensity of the debate that I would say something hurtful and harmful to someone I cared about. However, when I heard Henry Cloud say that during conflict we are to "go hard on the issue, but soft on the person," I realized I could address differences of opinion safely as long as I didn't turn the discussion into a personal attack.

Conflict is essentially a process of trying to solve problems by resolving differences of opinion. Therefore, it is crucial, especially when emotions are involved, that we stay focused on the question we are trying to answer. But too many times, we slide from the issue to the person and become critical or judgmental. And that criticism of the other person will immediately call into question the commitment and trust the relationship is built upon. If the relationship is broken, both parties lose.

Conflict will be healthy and productive as long as the relationship remains intact. If we care more about the other person than about winning the argument, we have a chance of finding common ground. If we stay focused on solving the problem rather than finding someone to blame, we can continue to work toward a solution. If we can learn to address complaints but avoid criticisms, we will see conflict as an opportunity for growth and not as a danger to be avoided.